



UNIVERSITY
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Many Traditions One Alaska

University of Alaska Statewide web site guidelines

Alaska.edu web pages are an important resource for many different audiences, including current and prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends, funding agencies, donors or prospective donors and the general public. Your department or program is representing UA statewide to these audiences, thus it's important that you thoroughly take into consideration the material and information (content) and how you want it presented (web layout) so that it reflects as positively on the university as possible.

To that end, a UA web design professional should be consulted to collaborate with staff members who have an intimate understanding of the unit's mission, audience and resources. The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) assists with web development for Statewide departments, as does the Office of Information Technology (OIT).

The following guidelines were developed to clarify roles and expectations for "who's responsible for what" on Statewide web pages. The guidelines are intended to shape the official UA presence on the web, provide a cohesive UA identity for all Statewide web pages and assist individual Statewide departments in creating, maintaining and showcasing their web resources in the best possible manner. Statewide units with official alaska.edu pages must follow these guidelines. Certain exceptions are made for programs with multiple funding or project partners.

If you have questions, please contact Kate Ripley, Director of Public Affairs, at kate.ripley@alaska.edu, ext. 8102; Kate Wattum, Web Information Coordinator in OPA, at kate.wattum@alaska.edu, ext. 8104; or Karl Kowalski, Executive Director of OIT User Services, at karl.kowalski@alaska.edu, ext. 8440.

Requirements

All official SW websites must comply with these requirements:

Home page/opening page must:

- Use the official UA banner and footer as provided in examples at www.alaska.edu/opa or www.alaska.edu/pres.
- Include the department's name within the banner.
- Provide an email link to the contact person responsible for updating the site.
- Provide contact information for the department.
- Include the affirmative action/equal opportunity statement.
- List the date when the page was last modified.
- Be accessible through a minimum of Priority 1 of the W3C Accessibility Initiative 1.0.
- Limited exceptions are granted on a case-by-case basis.

All subsequent pages must:

- Provide the name and contact information for the unit, including address, phone, fax and e-mail. Alternatively, a clear link to this contact information may be used. Include an e-mail link to the contact person(s) for the site.
- List the date when the page was last modified.
- Be accessible through a minimum of Priority 1 of the W3C Accessibility Initiative 1.0.

Additional requirements:

- Usage of the official UA logo is required. No other logo or modifications of the UA logo are allowed. Complete specs for allowable uses of the UA logo can be found at www.alaska.edu/opa/logo/index.xml
- Copyrighted materials, including photos and graphics, must be properly credited and approved for use.

Responsibilities

A new website created on the UA web server must include one person in the department as site contact. This person needs to obtain from OIT a website editing account. Each department's designated web coordinator is responsible for:

- Providing accurate and well-written content of the department's site.
- Keeping the pages maintained and current.
- Adhering to UA web policies, including these guidelines, UA regents' policies and regulations, as well as federal laws governing copyright, accessibility and employee/student privacy.

OIT and OPA recommend that at least one other person in the department obtain a website editing account as a backup. That will increase the probability that a critical update can be made without a multi-day or multi-week delay. The other reason for obtaining individual accounts is that OIT is converging passwords for all systems, so your website editing password will also be your personal password to access email, the MyUA portal, UAOnline, etc.

Maintaining a continuous ability to change your department website is important to the university. If the primary person responsible for updating your department's website leaves your department, make sure the person designated as secondary website editor assumes that role and accepts the responsibility for maintaining the site. Your department is solely responsible for the content of its webpages and for the activities of those who have been granted website editing privileges.

Getting started

If you are interested in having a new web page created, contact the Office of Public Affairs for assistance with design. An initial meeting with key players in your department (the department head, designated web coordinator) will be arranged with OPA.

Before the first meeting, please read the guidelines, make sure you understand the requirements, recommendations, your responsibilities and the resources available at Statewide, within OPA and OIT.

This is the first and most important stage of building a UA website. By understanding and following these guidelines, you will save much time and effort retrofitting your site later.

Prior to the meeting, consider what content you want for your site. Make sure the information is accurate, well organized and proofed for typos or grammatical errors. OPA can assist with polishing/editing the text, provide assistance with photographs or graphics, etc., but your department is responsible for providing initial content and the information.

One important tip: don't reinvent a web page that already exists. Browse existing web pages on alaska.edu to see if a resource you want already is established. If it is, link to it rather than duplicate it at your site. It's better to link to existing information rather than end up with two or more different sets of data that need regular updating. For example, there is no need to create a separate page on your site that lists the meeting schedule of the UA Board of Regents, as that information is already contained on the regents' website.

UA's Office of Information Technology and the Office of Public Affairs uses and supports the Roxen Content Management System. The reasons for this are many, but the most important is that it is supported, both in terms of training and maintenance, by OIT. Roxen is relatively easy for new users to learn, and content and information can be easily updated. It is the web system supported by OIT, and can be supported beyond a date that a web coordinator has moved on or duties shifted to a new employee.

Approval

A new website will be approved by OPA and made live when it meets the official guidelines and content is approved by the department's key stakeholders.

Maintenance

With every official website on alaska.edu comes the responsibility of managing the site and keeping it current. If a department page is not maintained, the web coordinator for the site will be alerted to the impending link removal from the official UA main pages.

OIT and OPA both encourage the use of website analysis tools to ascertain what content is most valuable to site visitors. User data provides excellent feedback for organizing content. OPA and OIT endorse the use of [Google Analytics](#) and similar technologies.

Branding standards

The Office of Public Affairs oversees and must approve the overall look/feel of alaska.edu web pages. OPA reserves the right to remove links to any official department site from official UA pages if the department site is not maintained or is grossly out of compliance with branding and logo standards. Out of compliance logos, banners or footers will be updated by OPA on a regular basis to ensure branding standards are met.

An institution's brand strength is improved by consistent use. Likewise, it's undermined by competing logos, inconsistent usage of fonts and colors, and other variations. Fundamentals of marketing require that any institution, business or organization achieve brand strength by regular, consistent use of logo, font, colors, etc.

Departments may choose from a variety of standard templates or request a customized design, similar to www.alaska.edu/scholars/.

Reminders for keeping your site current:

- Whenever printed materials are updated, change the corresponding information on your website.
- Check all links periodically to make sure they still work.

Online tool to check your links (free):

- W3C Link Checker. Enter the address (URL) of a document that you would like to check.
- Always change the date of the last update on the footer whenever a change is made. Better yet, set up your pages to do it automatically!

Use of official UA web banners

The official UA web banner is required on the home page of all official UA websites and all subsequent pages within the site. Color, font, logo etc. all must comply with UA branding standards under requirements.

Exceptions on using the official banner/footer require a written justification and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions are, in general, discouraged, as it weakens UA branding.

Frequently asked questions

1. How do I know if my site is in compliance?

OPA staff can review your site and let you know what needs to be done to bring sites into compliance with

the guidelines. To request a review, send an e-mail request with the URL of your site to syweb@alaska.edu.

2. **If the site doesn't reside on the UA server, do we still need to comply with the guidelines?**
Yes.
3. **What is the goal in having the same banner on every site?**
UA embarked on a branding campaign in 2002. The first step was to bring uniformity of message, style, logo use and branding of the university system to all print media, business cards, letterhead, and alaska.edu web pages. Use of consistent branding is commonplace at many university systems and corporations. Consistent branding allows UA to present a strong and easily recognizable image.
4. **Doesn't this uniform design come at the expense of site diversity?**
A bit, yes. That's the trade off with belonging to an organization much larger than your individual department or section. Creativity within sites is encouraged, so long as banner/footer and UA logo standards are met.
5. **Can department web developers create a site themselves without consulting OPA and just submit to OPA for approval to save time?**
No. OPA creates the official department banners and Roxen templates to ensure consistency and strength of branding. Exceptions to this practice weaken branding and institutional identity.
6. **Is there another way to co-brand without using the same banner? It conflicts with the design of my site.**
No. The UA web guidelines are intended to bring UA sites into compliance with a practice that has been in existence since 2002.

These guidelines are a working document developed collaboratively by UA Public Affairs and the Office of Information Technology, and are updated as needed. They mirror guidelines in place for UAF, which shares OIT resources with the Statewide MAU.